



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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For Immediate Release

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Park Authority Controlled Burn Program Approved For 2008

The Fairfax County Park Authority will conduct prescribed burns in three area parks in January and February 2008, setting ablaze several meadows and possibly one small forest stand in an effort to reduce invasive plant species, remove accumulated dead grass, and stimulate native plant growth in meadows, and to generally promote healthy meadows that support sensitive plant and animal species. Controlled burns emulate nature's wildfires and reduce the risk of unplanned fires in a safe, predictable manner. Five controlled meadow burns have been successfully conducted at Riverbend Park, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Huntley Meadows Park and at Sully Woodlands since the program started in 1998.

The Park Authority plans to conduct burns at E.C. Lawrence, Sully Woodlands and Huntley Meadows early next year. The program is conducted in partnership with the Virginia Department of Forestry and Fairfax County Fire and Rescue. Prior to a burn, neighbors are notified by letter. In anticipation of questions from neighbors, the Park Authority has developed a Question and Answer sheet on prescribed meadow burns. This is located online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/prescribedburns.pdf>.

"This program is part of an ongoing resource management effort to preserve and enhance healthy meadow complexes on parkland," said Park Authority Naturalist Charles Smith. "Prescribed burns are conducted regularly throughout Virginia and the United States and are considered the single best way to support fire-adapted meadow ecosystems," he added. Burns are conducted only when weather and site conditions are considered safe and sufficient staff and support equipment are in place.

For more information please contact the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662. (Media Note: Photos from previous burns are available.)

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